Executive Summary

Early parliamentary elections were held in March 2014. The Serbian Progressive Party won an absolute majority and created a coalition government that immediately faced a major emergency situation. Flooding impacted 1.6 million people and caused losses worth 3 per cent of the GDP. Disaster only worsened an already difficult economic situation: high unemployment, 8 per cent budget deficit and public debt of 69 per cent. In November, Serbia entered negotiations for a new 36-month standby agreement with the IMF, worth around €1bn. The package was expected to be in place as of January 1, 2015, but final approval was still pending at year’s end, as the IMF waits to see how the Serbian Government addresses its deficit and debt problems. The ban on employment in public administration and services, introduced as an austerity measure, is jeopardising the sustainability of newly established community social services and project-based activities that were to be mainstreamed into the system.

Although EU accession negotiations with Serbia started at the beginning of 2014 and the analytical examination of the EU screening proceeded according to plan, none of the chapters were opened. There is expectation that Chapter 23 on Fundamental Rights (including child rights) could be among the first to be opened. Pro-actively UNICEF supported the Government in the development of an implementation action plan.

UNICEF in Serbia achieved all key results outlined in the Country Programme Management Plan (CPMP), and effectively responded to the flood emergency situation through interventions in education, child protection and health. Experience with emergency pointed to a need to invest more efforts into capacity building for disaster risk reduction (DRR) and emergency response, both within the Government and UNICEF Serbia.

Significant progress was made toward developing measures to prevent school drop-out, diversified pre-school programs and developing capacities for provision of ECD services.

Intensive family support and family preservation services were modelled, with the aim of mainstreaming them into the system by 2015. Significant new resources were secured through cooperation with the European Community (EC) and will support further development of this service, enabling significant interventions in the area of child-friendly justice as of 2015. Two Multiple Indicator Cluster Surveys (MICS) were implemented and finalised in 2014, representing Serbian and Roma settlements in Serbia. Data were made available only two months after the field work and used as a source of evidence for important national policies, development of the Common Country Assessment and UN Development Assistance Framework (UNDAF), which reflect priorities for children, and the new Country Programme Document (CPD).

To drive greater social engagement and put the rights of the most disadvantaged children high on the social, political and economic agendas of the country, UNICEF established a strategic partnership with the daily newspaper “Politika”, which will publish, each month, starting in December 2014, a special page on Child Rights. The first two strategic projects with the Telenor Foundation - on Roma health mediators and the prevention of digital violence - were extended,
while the partnership with the Hemofarm Foundation contributed to income generation for the UNICEF Country Programme and enhancing brand visibility.

**Humanitarian Assistance**

The May 2014 floods affected a total of 1.6 million people in 38 municipalities and cities, most of them located in central and western Serbia. A total of 31,879 people were evacuated and 34 lost their lives. The impact of floods was considerable for the poorest socio-economic strata. Some 12 per cent of the 1.6 million people affected were from vulnerable groups. Although the Government responded rapidly, the extent of the crisis required involvement of external assistance and long-term recovery measures. The economic impact of the disaster was estimated at US$ 1.8 billion, or around 3 percent of the national GDP; damage and losses to health and education sectors were estimated at US$ 6.1 million and US$ 3.8 million, respectively. Post-disaster needs were estimated at US$ 1.4 million.

As part of its response to the floods, UNICEF assisted 9,250 flood-affected families with children through provision of hygiene packages and 5,000 blankets. Through partnership with the Centre for Interactive Pedagogy, a local NGO, psychosocial support and recreational activities were provided in collective centres for more than 700 children, while parents were supported through counselling on how to deal with stress and care for their young children. Support was also provided to the social welfare system to strengthen its outreach capacity to support the most vulnerable families with children, including children and their foster families, being evacuated from flooded areas. Furthermore, disaster awareness of 120,000 parents and children in flood-affected areas and collective centres was increased in relation to health, hygiene and nutrition. UNICEF also provided technical expertise for the elaboration and formulation of the Water and Sanitation and Education components of the Recovery Needs Assessment (RNA). An estimated 7,780 flood-affected children (pre-school to Grade 8) were supported to return to education through provision of school materials such as textbooks, notebooks, workbooks and backpacks. Flood-affected preschool institutions and schools were supported to resume their function through donations of equipment and supplies. As a means of helping social welfare service providers to intensify their outreach work, laptops were supplied, and two vehicles and a specialised van for transporting children with disability were being procured and expected to be delivered in the first quarter of 2015. The process of supplying winter boots to 2,000 children from the most deprived affected families began in November 2014, and was expected to be complete by the end of January 2015.

Lessons learnt from this emergency response and the RNA point to the need to invest more efforts in strengthening emergency preparedness and place more emphasis on disaster risk management. Serbia, like other countries in the region and globally, is increasingly exposed to disasters associated with natural hazards, including floods, earthquakes, wildfires, landslides and windstorms. Factors such as environmental degradation, climate change and haphazard urban development are contributing to the growing disaster risks. To further strengthen emergency preparedness and risk reduction capacities in the country, UNICEF developed a longer-term plan to support specific interventions in the sectors of health, education and child protection, implementation of which will continue in 2015; disaster risk management will be integrated into all the components of the new UNICEF 2016-2020 Country Programme. The focus is on: developing multi-hazard risk assessment and action plans for schools and social welfare institutions, and introducing DRR elements into the education curriculum; capacity building of health professionals on the provision of psycho-social support in emergencies; and support to health and education sectors to develop communication materials for emergencies.
Furthermore, it was recognised that comprehensive training on Disaster Risk Management and emergency preparedness and response for all UNICEF staff is a must for ensuring adequate and effective response at the onset of an emergency, and for supporting the Government in building educational and health systems prepared to face multiple risks.

**Equity Case Study**

Although the wellbeing of children in middle income countries (MICs) may seem adequate, national statistics can be deceiving. Behind the national averages, hidden away in the tables of data, are certain groups of children that are being excluded, whose rights are being violated and who are being left behind.

UNICEF engagement in MICs such as Serbia is specifically focused on these groups of children, where deprivation and exclusion lead to different forms of child rights violations. UNICEF is drawing attention to situations of multiple deprivation that have led to children being neglected or abused, dropping out of school or separated from their families.

Exclusion, segregation and isolation mean that the ‘hardest-to-reach’ groups are those that have the least interaction with public services (often due to access barriers), have weak social networks (often living isolated lives) and least aware of their rights (thus requiring help to demand the support they are legally eligible to). As such, they can easily remain invisible. Poor children, those living in Roma settlements, children with disability living in remote parts of Southern Serbia or children growing up with domestic violence or substance abuse are stripped of opportunities that the rest of Serbia’s children take for granted.

With limited financial resources available to middle-income countries, UNICEF has changed its engagement in Serbia to more upstream work and has become an actor that is appreciated for its policy advice and technical assistance, for being a strong voice for children and a convener that brings together different actors from within and outside of the Government, facilitating dialogue and inter-sectoral cooperation. Generation of evidence and knowledge is a basis for advocacy but also for the development of models – two engagement strategies that UNICEF successfully used to introduce new interventions that are enabling inclusion of vulnerable children. UNICEF Serbia’s equity-based engagement is best described through a few specific examples:

1) Using an evidence-base to advocate for the rights of excluded children, particularly Roma: Serbia regularly implements the MICS survey and had, as of 2005, introduced a separate MICS of the population living in Roma settlements. Thanks to that and the disaggregated nature of MCIS data, findings are presented in a way that puts Roma and exclusion of other marginalised groups of children (Roma, poorest, rural). Given that the MICS survey is carried out regularly (2005, 2010, 2014) it allows UNICEF to emphasise clear progress (e.g. in education inclusion of Roma children), as well as areas where gaps between the mainstream population and Roma or poor children are actually growing (due to progress in mainstream population and stagnation for marginalised groups).

Such advocacy efforts have helped put Roma inclusion at the centre stage of human rights reporting and contributed to investment in measures that increase access to education and health services for this population. Data from MICS and other UNICEF studies on pro-poor education and cash benefits have also clearly pointed out that the poorest children have much less access to services that are considered to be universally available, and facilitated national
dialogue and policy revisions aimed at reducing this disparity.

2) Participating in social care reforms through piloting of services that support families suffering from multiple deprivation:
In families characterised by multiple deprivation, children are at higher risk of neglect and abuse, and more likely to be out of school. As such, these children are ‘at the edge’ of the care system and could be placed in institutional care – especially if they have some form of disability. UNICEF is developing models of family support that can help prevent family separation by improving child safety and care. This is primarily being done through piloting an outreach service whereby “family partners” work closely with parents and the extended family. They help them improve their parenting skills and support their children to attend school. The family partner is also a local advocate for the family and helps family members to access services by assisting with school enrolment procedures, administrative requirements for receiving financial entitlements and helping to include children in various local activities.

3) Shaping an education system that embraces difference and diversity: Supporting inclusive education and promoting the right of children with disability to education.
The right of children with a disability to have access to education has been violated in Serbia. Even when education for children with disability was provided (in some localities), children had often been segregated into separate schools or separate classrooms. UNICEF has been working at both the policy and practice levels to create a more flexible and open education system that can respond better to the diversity of shapes and forms of children’s characteristics and capacities. UNICEF contributed to building an enabling environment through policy advice for enabling access of children with disability to mainstream education. More recently, UNICEF advocated for, and helped establish, an education inclusion unit in the education ministry. This unit offers hands-on and practical support to teachers and other school professionals on how to make their classroom environments and teaching practices inclusive and able to respond to different interests and demands. In addition, UNICEF supported the Network of Support for Inclusive Education, a forum that brings together like-minded practitioners from the public and CSO sectors to visit schools and provide advice on making their environments more inclusive. Recent data has shown that although more children with a disability are in mainstream education, greater efforts are needed to modify the social norms that hamper change.

Building of partnerships with Government actors, as well as civil society, independent bodies, Parliament and the private sector, was key in convening diverse forces to enhance public debate, participation and action around equity and child rights. It is particularly relevant today, when Serbia is facing economic crisis and austerity measures, and special care is needed to ensure the protection of children and families suffering from multiple deprivations.

**Summary Notes and Acronyms**

AMP – Annual Management Plan
CAN - Child abuse and neglect
CCA – Common Country Assessment
CRB – Central Review Body
CERF - Central Emergency Response Fund
CMT – Country Management Team
CO – Country Office
CP – Country Programme
CPMP – Country Programme Management Plan
CPD – Country Programme Document
CRBP - Child Rights Business Principles
CRC – Contract Review Committee
CSO – Civil society organisation
CSR - Corporate Social Responsibility
DCT – Direct cash transfer
DRR – Disaster Risk Reduction
EC – European Commission
ECD – Early childhood development
EWEA- Early Warning Early Action
EU – European Union
GBV – Gender-based violence
GDP – Gross Domestic Product
GSSC – Global Shared Service Centre
HACT – Harmonised Approach to Cash Transfer
IB – Institutional Budget
IE - Inclusive education
IMEP – Integrated Monitoring and Evaluation Plan
IPA – Instrument of Pre-accession
IR - Intermediary result
ITSS – Information Technology Solutions and Services
ITB – Invitation to Bid
KRA - Key results area
MICs- Middle-income countries
MICS – Multiple Indicator Cluster Survey
MoESTD – Ministry of Education, Science and Technological Development
MoH - Ministry of Health
MoLEVSA- Ministry of Labour, Employment, Veterans and Social Affairs
MTR - Mid-term review
NGO – Non-governmental organisation
OR – Other resources
ORE – Other resources - emergency
PBR – Programme Budget Review
PAS – Performance Appraisal System
PCA – Project Cooperation Agreement
PFP - Private Fundraising and Partnerships
PSFR – Private sector fundraising
RHM - Roma health mediators
RKLA - Regional knowledge and leadership agenda
RNA - Recovery Needs Assessment
RR – Regular resources
SA – Staff association
SEE - South-East Europe
SDC – Swiss Development Cooperation
SIPRU - Social Inclusion and Poverty Reduction Unit of the Government of Serbia
SitAn – Situation Analysis
SMT – Senior Management Team
SORS - Statistical Office of the Republic of Serbia
UK – United Kingdom
UNCT - United Nations Country Team
UNDAF – United Nations Development Assistance Framework
UNICEF – United Nations Children’s Fund
**Capacity Development**

In 2014, capacity development closely followed and supported the introduction of new evidence-based services and practices related to early childhood development (ECD) and prevention of family separation, affecting mainly the socially deprived and children with disabilities. In the health sector, education packages on ECD, assessment and early interventions were defined and adopted by the state accreditation body. Sixty paediatricians, 90 visiting nurses and 70 health mediators already benefited from this education package and are applying acquired knowledge in their work with more than 1,200 vulnerable children. Agreements were made with medical faculties and schools for nurses about integrating this education package into pre- and post-graduate curricula.

In line with findings from 2013 that pointed to growing numbers of children in care and the main reasons for child separation, more focus was put on strengthening the system to support biological families. Capacity was built among family outreach workers working with families at risk of separation, allowing them to apply tools and implement services targeting the most vulnerable families with children, while family advisers were trained to hold parental workshops.

Capacity development contributed to quality improvements in the field of pre-school education where 100 per cent of pre-schools, evaluators and municipalities were trained in self-evaluation and external evaluation processes.

UNICEF extended its partnership with the Network of Support of Inclusive Education which provides direct assistance to schools and fosters horizontal learning at the school, community and school administration levels. In 2014 the Network assisted 260 educational institutions with 150,000 students and trained 800 secondary education teachers, enhancing the overall capacity for inclusive practices and facilitating positive social norms and behaviours.

The gender-based violence (GBV) study and related training helped to raise understanding about gender equality, stereotypes and GBV for more than 2,525 teachers, 10,500 female and 11,100 male pupils from 50 schools in Serbia.

UNICEF supported the National Education Council to fulfil its mandate related to drop-out prevention and monitoring, while selected schools with 700 teachers and 7,138 students, learned to recognise students at risk of dropping out, and to model drop-out prevention and intervention measures.

**Evidence Generation, Policy Dialogue and Advocacy**

In 2014, UNICEF focused on utilising comprehensive evidence, generated in 2013 through research and continuous monitoring of child rights, to raise public awareness, open policy dialogues and advocate for policy revisions.

The study on education of vulnerable children, developed in partnership with the Social Inclusion and Poverty Reduction Unit of the Government, received an award for Best of UNICEF Research in 2014. UNICEF and its partners used the findings to lobby and advocate for further development and implementation of equity-based education policies at all levels. Its findings were also used to develop the Government’s Employment and Social Reform Programme, the key strategic document guiding programming of national and EU funds through 2020. The study’s findings have been discussed with practitioners from municipalities and the education and social welfare sectors, to increase their awareness of and willingness to implement the
recommendations.

The study on child-related cash benefits analysed the overall system of cash benefits from the perspective of its coherency, adequacy of design, targeting, coverage and the extent to which it meets the needs of vulnerable children and their families. Its recommendations formed the basis for revising the main policies in this area (Social Welfare Law and Law on Financial Support for Families), initiated in 2014 and supported by UNICEF through technical advice.

The MICS 2014 Serbia and MICS 2014 Serbia Roma Settlements surveys were conducted and finalised in 2014. MICS is still the only source of disaggregated data for many indicators on the status of vulnerable children and the Roma population in Serbia, and has further increased its relevance by adding nationally specific modules. Thanks to the timely release of preliminary data in July 2014, the MICS data were broadly disseminated and used to develop important strategic documents that are setting priorities for children for the next three-to-five years, such as the Second Report on Social Inclusion and Poverty Reduction, Employment and Social Reform Programme and annual EC Progress Reports on Serbia. MICS data were also fundamental for development of the SitAn, CCA, UNDAF and new CPD.

**Partnerships**

In partnership with civil society, independent institutions, Government actors and the private sector, UNICEF’s efforts to protect children from violence have led to important achievements. The results are best reflected in: a) increased numbers of at-risk children being reported to local child protection agencies; b) MICS data showing a substantial decrease in numbers of parents reporting the use of violent disciplinary methods; c) renewed Government commitment to introducing a legal ban on corporal punishment; d) strong emphasis on advancing the protection of children from violence in the Government’s Final draft Action Plan for Chapter 23 of the EU integration process. These partnerships contributed to several important results:

The joint EU/UNICEF evaluation of a regional violence protection project showed that the work of community cross-sectoral teams was a good practice, and the EU has now confirmed its support for scaling it up to other communities. The national health care system database for registration of child abuse and neglect is now operational (following UNICEF support for design and testing). The SOS line for reporting violence in school is fully operational. The gender-based violence study was used to raise awareness through social networks. UNICEF cooperated with the Ombudsman’s office to call attention to protection issues around street children, which inspired a public hearing in Parliament where UNICEF presented its position. The event was widely covered by the media.

The study on the wellbeing of families with children, completed with Hemofarm Foundation, received more press coverage than any recent national study published by UNICEF. In addition, the evaluation survey showed that over 28 per cent of Serbian citizens viewed the video clip and 35 per cent of citizens in four main cities were also informed about the campaign by reading about it in other media outlets. UNICEF closely cooperated with, and participated in, the Positive Parenting Campaign organised by the Network of Organisations for Children, which is calling for a ban on corporal punishment. Media coverage on banning corporal punishment in the home has intensified, with substantial practitioner/professional engagement on both sides of the debate.
External Communication and Public Advocacy

To drive change for children and influence the policies, understanding and behaviour of the general population with respect to child rights, UNICEF Serbia has adopted an integrated all its media channels. UNICEF’s presence in the media was extensive on all media channels and platforms. Serbian print, broadcast and digital media and news agencies published or broadcasted 2,799 articles, news notes, and video stories about UNICEF-related activities in Serbia. UNICEF Serbia’s local website had 347,472 hits and the RedDot website 40,000 page views. ICON published seven stories from Serbia, while the Regional Office featured 19 news notes.

Social media engagement was particularly strong in 2014. Our Facebook page had 35,000 “Likes”, compared to 24,533 in 2013. We gained 995 new followers on Twitter, reaching 1,049 people. This rise is a result of a shift in our communication strategy from information-sharing to two-way conversation, allowing us to listen and respond to our audiences.

The integration of communication and public advocacy with programme planning and implementation, private sector fundraising and partnership activities has significantly contributed to UNICEF’s brand awareness in Serbia. Broad public engagement and support for children’s issues enhanced UNICEF’s ability to play a broader policy advocacy and resource mobilisation role.

UNICEF National Ambassadors were effective advocates for national priorities, emergency and recovery and resource mobilisation through project visits and use of their digital platforms.

One of the major initiatives of 2014 was the implementation of the 2014 MICS - Serbia and Serbia Roma Settlements, and subsequent data dissemination. Thanks to the public appeal by UNICEF National Ambassadors and intensive communication activities before the start of the field work, the MICS had an unprecedented response rate, guaranteeing high data quality. The preliminary findings, pointing to equity gaps between different vulnerable groups of children and women – particularly between the general public and the population living in Roma settlements – were released only two months after the field work and received strong media coverage. MICS data is widely used by both UNICEF and partners for advocating for children, particularly the most vulnerable.

South-South Cooperation and Triangular Cooperation

UNICEF offices in Serbia, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia and Montenegro jointly organised a conference to launch UNICEF’s “Communicating with Children” resource package in local languages. Some 100 TV professionals, representatives of electronic media regulatory agencies, ministries and academia opened a debate on the quality, appropriateness, relevance and inclusiveness of children’s TV programmes. Since these countries share similar language, cultural and media space, the cross-border collaboration between the TV stations and media regulators was discussed as a natural way to ensure productive use of limited resources in the co-production and exchange of child-friendly TV programmes.

As a follow-up, public broadcasters and electronic media regulators from Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia and the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia joined the roundtable organised by UNICEF Serbia to present the findings of an analysis of children’s TV programmes in Serbia. An agreement was reached that children’s programmes in the Western Balkans need to reflect both national socio-economic and cultural contexts and regional perspectives, in order to foster a culture of tolerance and equity. UNICEF’s expert support was sought for the
convening and capacity development of media producers and broadcast regulators.

UNICEF facilitated Serbia’s knowledge and experience-sharing, both regionally and globally. Serbian representatives shared good practice examples at an event organised for the UNICEF Executive Board in New York focusing on preventing the placement of children in institutional care, and at the Minsk Regional Conference on violence against children. Serbia shared good practice examples on child protection and supporting families at risk of separation by hosting governmental delegations - from Kyrgyzstan, Bosnia and Herzegovina and Montenegro. Serbian professionals widened their perspectives on the health system response to ECD by visiting Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia and the UK and by hosting visiting nurses from these countries.

Representatives from six South-eastern Europe (SEE) countries gathered in Serbia to set up strategic directions for development and implementation of accreditation standards for maternities and neonatal departments that would integrate baby/mother-friendly care principles including, "10 steps for successful breast-feeding". The conclusions will be used by the accreditation and quality improvement agencies of the SEE Health Network in their national contexts.

**Support to Integration and cross-sectoral linkages**

In 2014, inter-sectoral collaboration was the key factor leading to success of processes related to development of drop-out prevention measures and protection of children from violence. One of the main UNICEF priorities in 2014 was to support the design and implementation of drop-out prevention measures at the national and school level. Tackling multi-dimensional phenomena such as drop-out required cooperation between different sectors of the Government and all interested stakeholders. UNICEF used its convening role to gather all relevant ministries and agencies in charge of education, health, social welfare, poverty reduction and youth and involve them in designing and monitoring of holistic policies and strategies related to drop-out. A study visit abroad, in 2013, allowed key decision-makers and professionals to familiarise themselves with a good practice in this area, helping them understand how the drop-out problem cuts across the boundaries of one ministry. School models for drop-out prevention were developed in cooperation with academia and practitioners, and with much input from different sectors at both the local and national levels. Thanks to that, the model developed is multi-dimensional and takes into account all factors contributing to an effective drop-out prevention mechanism.

In the area of child protection from violence, local cross-sectoral collaboration was achieved through signed memoranda of understanding, the establishment of cross-sectoral teams that held regular meetings on issues of concern in four of Serbia’s largest cities. As a result, the total number of cases reported to the social welfare system increased in these cities, even though it remained the same nationally, proving that the approach works. This is an excellent indicator of greater awareness and co-operation between different sectors. Furthermore information sessions on referral procedures held by social workers in schools and health centres are contributing to more efficient and effective child protection.

**Service Delivery**

UNICEF is addressing the lack of services for children ‘at the edge of care’ and families at risk of separation through piloting an intensive family outreach service in four cities. Thanks to a strategic partnership with the Institute for Social Protection and the Novak Djokovic Foundation, efforts were invested in quality service design (relying on experience from Bosnia and
Herczegovina and the UK), continued mentoring support to family outreach workers and robust monitoring.

After the first year of a two-year pilot, initial assessments showed that the service has managed to reach ‘hardest-to-reach groups’ (such as the Roma minority), to address multiple deprivation (poverty combined with disability and mental health or substance abuse issues) and, most importantly, that it can help prevent the placement of a child in care and help family re-unification. The Ministry of Labour, Employment, Veterans and Social Affairs (MoLEVSA) and EU have recognised the potential of outreach-based family support services and are supporting UNICEF efforts to adapt this service for families with children with a disability.

More than anything else, this pilot has opened a Pandora’s Box, as social work practitioners demand new knowledge and skills for working with parents and families that are struggling with different vulnerabilities. A strategic partnership was established with practitioners from the UK who are willing to share tools and approaches in family outreach work and help supervise their application in 2015. Horizontal learning exchange with practitioners from the UK further expanded the knowledge and views of practitioners in Serbia.

**Human Rights-Based Approach to Cooperation**

UNICEF is collaborating with independent institutions and trying to support them to pro-actively respond to discrimination and violations of human rights by increasing their visibility and accessibility for vulnerable children, by promoting a culture of tolerance and respect for human rights and by promptly addressing violations through requests for system changes.

Various qualitative research studies demonstrate that Roma children and their parents do not fully exercise their rights to health, education and social protection. At the same time, even when they try to access and exercise different rights, many experience serious discrimination within each of those systems.

In addition to strengthening systems and service provision within the three main above mentioned sectors, UNICEF has, in partnerships with Ombudsman’s Office and Office for Commissioner for Equality, supported rights-holders to claim their rights. Ten grass-root NGOs, representing the Roma women’s network, were supported to work directly with Roma communities, primarily mothers, and familiarise them with their rights and the mechanisms they can use to claim violation of rights and discrimination.

Meticulously trained co-ordinators from the Roma NGOs (20 activists) are reaching out to some 40 settlements that lack sanitation and hygiene facilities, and holding interactive workshops with more than 4,000 parents of young children.

An expanded and well-equipped network of outreach workers has been ensuring better access to information, services and individualised support in cases of discrimination and rights violation. Through group and individual sessions, more than 700 Roma (525 female and 189 male) have already been taught about their children’s right/entitlements within each of the three social sector systems and about parental roles and obligations in support of children’s proper growth and development. This training also informed them about how to recognise discriminatory acts and violations of their children’s rights to education, social welfare and healthcare, and how to submit individual complaints to relevant and independent institutions. In 2014, 38 complaints were made to the relevant institutions.
Gender Mainstreaming and Equality

In 2014 UNICEF and the Ministry of Education, Science and Technological Development (MoESTD) undertook efforts to bring gender perspectives into the violence-prevention agenda and programming at the school level. To respond to the identified knowledge gap and inform future programming, the first national survey on the prevalence of gender-based violence was conducted by UNICEF, MoESTD, the Institute of Psychology and Centre for Gender Studies as a part of the UN Joint Project on Violence against Women. A total of 11,669 boys and 10,708 girls, as well as 3,258 teachers, participated in the research, sharing their opinions, experiences and recommendations for action. Participation in the research also served as an opportunity for awareness raising on gender and GBV. The survey indicated that 69 per cent of primary – and even 74 per cent of secondary school – students experienced some form of GBV in school. Furthermore, high percentages of young people, particularly boys, justify violence and GBV on some occasions and express highly discriminatory attitudes towards homosexuals.

On the basis of this data, the gender awareness and sensitisation training programme was developed by academic and civil society GBV activists. Boys, girls and teachers in 50 primary and secondary schools were supported, through training and trained mentors, to implement different models of gender sensitisation, prevention of GBV and adequate responses. In 10 locations, schools and entire communities were further supported by groups of trained youth GBV activists to work on eliminating gender stereotypes through different community and social media activities. With UNICEF support, 36 young trainers (18 boys and 18 girls) and 350 peer activists were trained (150 girls and 200 boys) and interacted face-to-face with about 5,000 of their peers, and more than 10,000 through social media, to sensitise them to GBV issues.

A correlation was found between violence against women and violence against children. Along with the Autonomous Women Centre, UNICEF initiated discussions aimed at building linkages between systems and professionals who are engaged in protection of these two groups from violence. This process should help improve national and local protocols and provide concrete protection measures – for women, mothers and children.

Environmental Sustainability

UNICEF Serbia doesn't systematically conduct environmental impact assessment of its interventions. However, this is probably due to the nature of our work in a MIC like Serbia, where the primary focus is on policy and advocacy. The recovery following the emergency situation caused by floods in 2014 was in itself an opportunity for UNICEF and its partners to look at programmes through the environmental lens and consider the increased impact of climate change and need for disaster risk management. As a part of overall management, more emphasis has been put on reducing office waste and optimising energy consumption; the office heating system was fully renovated to be more efficient.

Effective Leadership

Key annual results (eight for programme and four for management) were defined through a participatory process and described in the 2014-2015 annual management plan (AMP). Progress towards AMP results was reviewed at mid-year and during the annual review, while specific issues were discussed at regular CMT and programme meetings. Furthermore, personnel assessment work plan outputs were prepared by each staff member, with their supervisors, and are closely linked to annual programme and management priorities and results. Day-to-day priorities are shared and discussed through weekly meetings.
The CMT met regularly during 2014 (six meetings in total) and took significant steps to improve Operations and Programme management by: 1) improving the 2014-2015 AMP, 2) improving HACT assessment planning and monitoring, 3) closely monitoring implementation of the fundraising strategy, 4) regularly monitoring the main performance indicators and 5) addressing issues identified in the regional staff survey.

Appropriate actions were taken regarding remaining recommendation from the 2013 audit. Improving the harmonised approach to cash transactions (HACT) assurance process was a priority in 2014; consequently all audit recommendations were closed. Furthermore, the HACT Assurance plan was aligned to HACT guidance issued in August 2014.

Management indicators were tracked regularly through reports on monthly management, grants utilisation and outstanding DCTs. Progress was reviewed at CMT and Programme meetings, and timely corrective actions taken.

UNICEF Serbia’s Risk and Control Library was reviewed in March 2014. The CMT concluded that all risks identified in 2013 are still valid. Of six key risks identified, three were assessed as low, two as medium, and one (related to potential funding shortfalls) was assessed as high. The action plan for this risk, and the mitigation measures put in place have so far proven adequate. UNICEF ensured Instrument of Pre-Accession (IPA) funds; pledge income in 2014 increased; and additional allocations to compensate for reduced RR was secured.

The Emergency Risk Assessment component of the Early Warning/Early Action website was updated in July. UNICEF Serbia’s risk profile and preparedness pages, including key actions, were updated and uploaded into the system.

The Business Continuity Plan was updated in October, taking into consideration experience related to responding to the emergency situation in May/June.

Statutory/oversight committees performed their function adequately. The Contracts Review Committee reviewed and recommended seven cases, and the Project Cooperation Agreement Committee reviewed and recommended 14 submissions. The committees’ recommendations were further reviewed and approved by the Representative.

**Financial Resources Management**

The CMT closely monitored funds utilisation, programme implementation and cash assistance on a monthly and quarterly basis. Emphasis was given to timely liquidations of DCT’s, and full funds utilisation one month prior to grant expiry date. This improvement in management practice led to no losses due to exchange rate fluctuation or DCT liquidation after grant closing date, generating a savings of some US$10,000 when compared to similar costs in 2013.

Utilisation rates were 100 per cent (IB), 100 per cent (RR), 95 per cent (OR), and 87 per cent (ORE). UNICEF’s OR income in 2014 was US$3,292,140, which was in line with the 2014 target. Private sector fundraising (PSFR) income was US$763,000, slightly above the 2014 target of US$753,000.

UNICEF kept the rate of outstanding DCTs for over six and nine months below the set targets of 2 per cent and 0 per cent respectively, and only one DCT was outstanding for more than six months. Accounts were cleared regularly on a monthly basis. All mid-year and year-end schedules and reports were submitted on time. Cash forecasting tools were used for efficient
planning and utilisation of financial resources, and deadlines for bank reconciliation were met. As per 2013 audit recommendations, UNICEF Serbia formulated a HACT assurance plan based on partners’ risk rating and amounts of transaction, monitoring it closely. Furthermore, UNICEF contracted a third-party service provider for micro-assessments, special audits, and spot-checks; one scheduled audit, six micro-assessments and two spot-checks were undertaken. In addition, four partners were assessed using the simplified financial checklist and 50 spot-checks were performed by qualified UNICEF staff, while two HACT-related trainings for 34 partners were conducted.

**Fund-raising and Donor Relations**

Donor report schedules, judicious and timely utilisation of funds and funding requirements were regularly reviewed at Programme, CMT and Fundraising Committee meetings.

UNICEF submitted four donor reports on time in 2014. The reports were reviewed for quality by the Deputy Representative and approved by the Representative. In addition, UNICEF provided a timely contribution to one regionally managed progress report.

All grants expiring in 2014 were fully utilised.

The office secured three new multi-year grants: bilateral donors (Swiss Development Cooperation, SDC, and the EU) and our corporate partner, Telenor.

In 2014 US$3.29M was raised within the approved OR ceiling (US$4.37 million) and activities in all sectors, foreseen in the annual work plans for 2014, were funded. US$5.3M was re-phased for 2015 and onwards.

UNICEF also raised ORE for flood response and recovery from SDC, the Central Emergency Response Fund, the private sector and UNICEF National Committees, in the amount of US$1,524,195.

PSFR income continued to play an important role in resource mobilisation for the Country Programme, with income growth in 2014 of 24 per cent. R&D investment funds allocated to UNICEF Serbia in 2013 to compensate for the loss of income expected due to the closure of sales of UNICEF products did not yield the planned results in growth of pledge income. Planned activities were affected by the flood emergency in May-June 2014. However, pledge income still grew by 64 per cent in comparison to 2013.

UNICEF’s plan was to ensure a sales income of US$153,000 and to secure closure of the sales business, in line with the country sales closure plan. We managed to ensure US$115,000 gross sales income. The final net income will be known after submission of relevant documentation to Private Fundraising and Partnerships (PFP) in mid-March 2015, and upon final consolidation by the PFP finance section, by the end of second quarter of 2015.

**Evaluation**

The integrated monitoring and evaluation plan (IMEP) was regularly monitored and reviewed as a part of regular quarterly, mid-year and end-year programme reviews; all activities were finalised as planned. UNICEF Serbia did not conduct any evaluations in 2014, but did regularly update and follow-up on the management response to evaluations carried out in previous years. UNICEF Serbia also participated and provided input to three multi-country regional evaluations related to key regional results areas: 1) Children’s right to education: including all children in
quality learning, 2) Children’s right to a family environment and 3) Children’s right to health: infant and under-five mortality. Recommendations arising from the multi-country evaluations will be reflected in the new Country Programme Document for the period 2016-2020.

**Efficiency Gains and Cost Savings**

UNICEF Serbia continued to use common UN country services and contracts for travel agency, procurement of basic office supplies, hotel services, post and pouch. This, combined with greater use of technology and new communication services (VOIP and Skype), resulted in overall efficiency gains and a saving of approximately US$5,000.

**Supply Management**

The total value of local procurements in 2014 amounted to US$1,008,794. UNICEF completed 28 market research, eight invitations to bid (ITBs) and seven request for proposal (RFP) processes for local procurement. Of the 84 purchase orders, 37 were institutional procurement of goods and services, valued at US$610,699, and 47 for individual contractors and consultants, valued at US$398,095. In addition UNICEF ordered emergency-related supplies from Supply Division for US$119,500.

The main procurement was for programme activities, PSFR, emergency response and office supplies. Programme-related procurement consisted of services and printing. Procurement of promotional materials for fundraising and sales campaigns were mainly for brochures, posters, newsletters, direct marketing material, pay slips. For the emergency response UNICEF Serbia procured hygiene kits, blankets, pumps, notebooks, textbooks, backpacks, IT equipment and school furniture, and initiated the procurement of three utility vehicles and a specialised van for people with a disability. Furthermore, regular office supplies were procured throughout the year. There were no major building repairs in 2014.

Institutional service contracts were put in place for on-call driver sales support, printing, communications material, graphic design, travel, conference organisation, equipment, security, Internet connectivity and other services. A number of service contracts were arranged for premises security, ancillary services and building maintenance.

Physical inventory of Operations and Programme supplies were completed in Q4 of 2014, as part of year-end closure activities. The total value of Programme supplies in the warehouse (number 229) as of 12 December 2014 amounted to US$1,776.80.

Good collaboration continued with other UN agencies in the country, and UNICEF used existing long-term agreements for basic office supplies, travel, mail and mobile telephone services.

**Security for Staff and Premises**

Safety and security of staff and premises were maintained thought the year. The warden system tree and emergency lists were updated regularly. The warden exercise was conducted twice during the year, as were two satellite phone tests and one fire drill. The exercises indicated a functional warden system, and that UNICEF premises could be evacuated in six minutes in case of fire.

All fire extinguishers were regularly checked and maintained, and two staff members attended fire safety training organised by the UNDSS. Consequently, the two staff members were certified in the use of fire extinguishers and fire prevention. All alternative exit routes in the
building were clearly indicated, regularly checked and kept clear.

The UN Security Plan was updated and approved by the Senior Management Team (SMT). All staff and consultants were provided with UN ID cards with expiration date aligned to their contract end date.

**Human Resources**

During 2014, no recruitment of fixed-term appointment for national staff positions took place. One TA position (Fund Raising Assistant, Support to Pledge GS-6) was created, was advertised in November 2014, and the selection process is expected to be completed in the first half of 2015. Therefore, there were no Central Review Body cases in 2014. Recruitment for the Deputy Representative post was twice advertised (September and November 2014), as no suitable candidate was found in the first round. Finalisation of the selection process is expected by mid-January 2015.

HR in 2014 provided guidance, assistance and support for the selection of consultants and individual contractors (27 vacancy announcements).

Performance planning in accordance with the Performance Appraisal System (PAS) was completed, and all staff completed their mid-year review discussions on time. PAS performance planning focused on results measurement through assessment of effective outputs and competencies.

The Local Staff Development Committee supported staff training and identified competency gaps. Individual and group trainings were organised to respond to requirements of the CP and developmental plans outlined in the PASs. Group IT trainings were conducted to introduce migration to the Office 365 package. Four staff attended the Programme, Policy and Procedure (PPP) training organised by the Regional Office in 2014, bringing to six the number of national officers trained (75 per cent of NOs) and to seven the total of staff trained (37 per cent of total office staff) in the last two years on the new PPP approaches.

The Staff Association was closely involved in the June 2014 PBR process. One position will be affected by the establishment of the GSSC. The incumbent was made aware of the situation and informed in June 2014 on the abolishment of the position as of 31 December 2015.

The global Staff Survey results and UNICEF Serbia component were presented by the Staff Association and discussed at an all-staff meeting.

The Staff Association played an active role in team-building events. Its secretary took part in regional Staff Association training in Tirana. Staff Association and management promoted flexible working hour arrangements.

Staff Association elections were conducted in December 2014; newly elected members will take over their functions in January 2015.

**Effective Use of Information and Communication Technology**

Continued availability of ICT resources and efficient user support were ensured in 2014 through effective technical maintenance of ICT infrastructure, in accordance with Information Technology Solutions and Services (ITSS) objectives and standards. UNICEF-standard cloud-based business software solution Office365 was successfully implemented, in conjunction with
an upgrade of workstations and mobile devices to MS Office 2013, boosting organisational effectiveness and efficiency and creating a fully mobile workspace. The upgrade offered larger email inbox size of 50GB – and enabled users to send and receive messages with 25MB attachments.

One Drive allows users to store, edit and organise individual work documents in secure, cloud-based storage up to 1TB, to be accessible from a web browser or local devices, to synchronise documents among devices and for off-line work, as well as to share documents with colleagues and external partners, facilitating simultaneous review and editing. Free access to online applications and automatic backup, improved business continuity capability, and the migration from Lotus local server to the Microsoft cloud solution, reduces UNICEF’s local hardware footprint and energy consumption in the server room.

Microsoft Lync, fully integrated with Microsoft Office, allowing users to organise and participate in online meetings, offers real-time presence status, screen/application sharing, instant messaging and voice/video calls through Internet, facilitating additional cost-saving.

UNICEF Serbia’s primary Internet connection speed was increased to 10Mbps/10Mbps, to further improve external connectivity and bandwidth to centralise and cloud based UNICEF business systems, VISION with SAP and Office 365. Obsolete ICT equipment was submitted to the December 2014 PSB and recommended for disposal.

As part of the resource mobilisation strategy, and supported by UNICEF National Ambassadors, social media (Facebook, Twitter) were used to inform about and promote UNICEF’s work in Serbia. Social media was also critical in encouraging wide participation by the Serbian population in the successful MICS5 field work.

Programme Components from RAM

ANALYSIS BY OUTCOME AND OUTPUT RESULTS

OUTCOME 1 By the end of 2015, more excluded children and families benefit from education, social welfare, and justice services, in line with new legislation.

Analytical Statement of Progress:
This programme component aims to support Government in its reform of the social sector – notably to align its regulatory frameworks – model implementation of new legislation and generate knowledge and evidence, with a strong focus on multi-sectoral approaches. Equity and ensuring that reforms benefit the most vulnerable are a primary focus. The main emphasis was placed on the operationalization of legal and regulatory frameworks, modelling, capacity development of professionals, knowledge generation and strengthening of child rights monitoring infrastructure in the outcome areas of health, education, child protection and social inclusion.

Addressing issues of the most vulnerable children requires a multi-sectoral approach that was reinforced through the Country Programme’s contribution in advancing the Regional Knowledge and Leadership Agenda (RKLA) key result areas (KRAs). It became evident that achievements of multiple RKLA results require engagement of the same interventions and competencies that can only be achieved through facilitation of cooperation and synergy between different sectors. Therefore, interventions related to children’s right to a family environment, to early learning, to
health, to inclusive quality education and social protection were implemented in close cooperation with key partners from different sectors, taking care that they mutually reinforce each other. Progress was made in advancing the agenda within the result area related to a young’s child right to comprehensive wellbeing by promoting an integrated approach to ECD and building capacity of professionals for its implementation. In 2014 preparations were carried out for a more intensive engagement in the area of a child’s right to access to justice, planned for the next three years as a tripartite initiative between MoLEVSA, the EU and UNICEF.

UNICEF continued its support to Government through policy advice and technical assistance for the drafting of equity-based policies and programmes to support the most vulnerable children. Support was provided for development of new programmes and quality standards for pre-school education, policies and measures for drop-out prevention as well as revisions to legislation related to financial assistance to vulnerable children. The Health system was supported through development of accreditation standards for maternities and drafting of the national ECD program. UNICEF support to development of the National Youth Strategy was also much appreciated by key partners.

Operationalization of the legal framework was supported through modelling of diversified pre-school programmes, family support services and drop-out prevention measures. These interventions were accompanied with capacity development of respective professionals in the education and social welfare sectors.

Monitoring of child rights was strengthened through piloting of the Monitoring Framework for Inclusive Education and beginning of its use for baseline data collection. The system for monitoring of child abuse and neglect in Health was scaled up, and its further implementation regulated by law.

Timely release of new MICS 2014 data on the general population and Roma minority influenced some key planning and reporting processes of the Government and UN.

Serbia faced an emergency situation due to floods, and UNICEF promptly responded, as part of the UN Country Team, by providing psycho-social support to children who had been evacuated and accommodated in collective centres, as well as technical assistance and school supplies in education; the response in the health sector included development of a set of communication materials for children and parents.

**OUTPUT 1** By end of 2015, the education system and municipal institutions ensure that pre-school is inclusive; and that statutory mechanisms and services are resourced and functioning.

**Analytical Statement of Progress:**
In collaboration with the Ministry of Education, Science and Technological Development, UNICEF continued to support reforms in pre-school education through policy advice and technical assistance aimed at expanding coverage and improving the quality of pre-school programmes. Interventions sought to advance early learning and school readiness, and included piloting of diversified four-hour pre-school programmes for children not covered by the network, expanding physical capacities in rural and remote areas, advocating for universal coverage of four-hour pre-school programmes (especially for children of poor families and rural areas) and increasing parental awareness of the benefits of pre-school education for child development.
In 2014 national and local stakeholders were strengthened to develop an inclusive pre-school education policy and practices, as well as to implement quality standards for pre-schools: 100 per cent of pre-schools, evaluators and municipalities were strengthened for both self-evaluation and the external evaluation process. Additional indicators related to inclusiveness of the pre-school system were developed and integrated into external evaluation mechanisms. Municipalities were strengthened to plan inclusive pre-school services.

The theoretical foundations for diversified pre-school programmes for children aged 3-to-5.5 were developed, as were new programmes in the areas of art, culture, science and healthy lifestyles. Twelve pre-school institutions were trained to implement the new programmes. These new pre-school modalities are four hours in length, are provided every day and are free of charge to families, giving children and parents the opportunity to choose educational programmes according to their needs and interests in contrast to traditional all-day preschool programmes. To assure programme quality, pre-school institutions were provided with advanced professional training and mentor support. Expansion of capacities in rural areas, through adaptation of local pre-school facilities, is underway; 460 children were enrolled in 2014.

OUTPUT 2 By end of 2015, the education system and municipal institutions ensure that primary school is inclusive; and that statutory mechanisms and services are resourced and functioning to identify risk and prevent school drop-out.

Analytical Statement of Progress:
To advance inclusion of all children in quality learning, the MoESTD was supported to establish the ‘Unit for Coordination of IE’ (Inclusive Education) and was provided with policy advice to enhance the legal framework. The Violence Prevention Unit (VPU) became fully integrated in the Ministry’s structures and additional funds for programmatic activities were secured. The overall capacity of the education system for planning and implementation of IE and prevention of school drop-out and violence was further enhanced.

UNICEF’s partner, the Network for Support to IE, provided assistance to more than 260 educational institutions serving about 150,000 students. School administrations’ capacities for IE were enhanced; an IE Peer Support Team was established and good IE practices were documented. Parents were sensitised about IE through regional round-tables. Inter-sectoral committees in 10 municipalities were strengthened to better support inclusion of vulnerable children in education.

A monitoring framework for IE was developed, piloted and is ready to become part of the regular monitoring system. The National Education Council defined a set of national drop-out prevention measures and has produced a costing study of school drop-out. The set of measures and mechanisms for identifying children at risk and preventing drop-out was developed and is being piloted. It combines individual intervention for children at risk with support to schools to strengthen education quality.

The Ministry of Youth and Sport was provided with policy advice and technical assistance in development of the new National Strategy for Youth.

Research on gender-based violence and tools for measuring school safety were finalised. Fifty schools were supported to strengthen GBV prevention programming, while children’s attitudes towards violence were addressed through a social media campaign, community activities and a
new website.

Following the May 2014 floods in Serbia, UNICEF supported recovery efforts in the education sector through the provision of technical assistance and supplies.

**OUTPUT 3** By the end of 2015, the social welfare system applies a case management approach to its child clients (with a focus on children victims of violence) and ensures the availability of specialised community-based services, with particular emphasis on children with disabilities and adolescents off-track.

**Analytical Statement of Progress:**
UNICEF continued to advance the status of child protection to secure full implementation of children’s right to a family environment.

The main emphasis in 2014 was on safeguarding and supporting families most at risk of separation. In this regard, intensive family support services were piloted in four cities, where Governmental agencies are taking lead to provide training, support, monitoring and assessment, while cases are referred by case managers. The pilot proved that this type of support is very much needed by the most disadvantaged families, and its sustainable funding must be secured. The Government and EU have agreed to invest substantial funds in expanding the pilot to cover families with children with complex/severe disability. Focus was also put on strengthening the fostering system to act in emergencies, to avoid even temporary placements in institutional care. As a follow-up to the UNICEF2013 study on cash benefits and intensive advocacy for policy changes in the area of social protection, the MoLEVSA has initiated changes to the law on financial assistance to families with children and has committed to improving disability-related allowances. UNICEF supported the process with technical assistance.

Particular attention was paid to strengthening inter-sectoral coordination to advance inclusive education and secure better cooperation and support of the social welfare system for inclusion.

Significant preparations, including studies and analysis, were invested in kick-starting a new three-year, tripartite initiative between MoLEVSA, the EU and UNICEF, for which intensive implementation will start in 2015. It will focus on family strengthening and advancing justice for children through the application of diversion schemes and measures for protection of child victims/witnesses.

UNICEF supported the emergency flood response by providing psycho-social support to children who were evacuated and accommodated in collective centres by establishing Child-friendly Spaces.

**OUTPUT 4** By the end of 2015 the health system ensures that new-born and early childhood services are available and used by excluded groups, with a particular emphasis on children with disabilities and Roma.

**Analytical Statement of Progress:**

The National ECD Programme for the Health system is under finalisation; adoption was postponed to 2015. The first draft of accreditation standards for baby/mother-friendly maternities and neonatal units was developed and will further contribute to advancing children’s health
outcomes. UNICEF made initial agreements with medical faculties and nursing schools with a view toward mainstreaming ECD topics into pre- and post-graduate curricula.

With UNICEF support, new capacity building programmes for health professionals on early stimulation, developmental assessment and early interventions are ongoing in 10 selected municipalities, training 60 paediatricians, 90 visiting nurses and 70 Roma health mediators (RHM). A team of 25 health professionals was trained by an international expert in using the new child development monitoring tool, and will further support its wide usage throughout the country. A study on parental knowledge and practices tied to support for ECD was finalised (in general and Roma populations), and will be used to inform parenting-support programmes.

UNICEF and the MoH continued to address key bottlenecks to the health of Roma mothers and young children by supporting RHM. However, the full usage of the UNICEF/Telenor-supported database on Roma health and full institutionalisation of RHM within the health system were delayed, awaiting strategic decisions by the MoH.

The health system is actively implementing the Special Protocol on child abuse and neglect (CAN) by forming expert teams in 85 per cent of relevant health care institutions, increasing capacities of health professionals, strengthening local inter-sectoral collaboration and increasing parental awareness. The Institute for Public Health expanded the data collection and reporting system for CAN from 13 pilot health institutions to 66, which led to more than 700 cases being reported to the health system. A new law on evidence demands reporting on CAN.

In response to the flood emergency, a set of communication materials for children and parents was developed and widely distributed, along with hygiene packages for affected families.

**OUTPUT 5** By the end of 2015, national authorities use a reliable sex-disaggregated data system for planning, budgeting and monitoring to address child poverty and exclusion.

**Analytical Statement of Progress:**
UNICEF continued cooperation with the Republican Statistical Office (SORS) and other partners to enhance child rights monitoring. Use of DevInfo was promoted through trainings for public administration, civil society and media. SORS expressed willingness to take over responsibility for future DevInfo trainings and development. Availability of reliable data proved to be vital during the emergency response to May floods; DevInfo was useful both during the emergency and for assessing post-disaster needs.

**OUTCOME 2** By the end of 2015, Serbia’s child rights infrastructure will be strengthened and civic and private engagement enhanced to realise children’s rights

**Analytical Statement of Progress:**
This programme component aims to reinforce and complement system reforms through strengthening independent monitoring of the impact of reforms on the most vulnerable, enhancing awareness and voices of rights-holders – particularly disadvantaged groups – and promoting positive behaviours and fostering inclusion. As per the MTR recommendations, the elements of this programme component have been firmly integrated with the first programme component, oriented to system-strengthening. This enabled closer cooperation between civil society organisations and independent bodies on one side and Governmental stakeholders on the other side, resulting in enhanced synergy and impact of different initiatives.

One of the important elements of this programme is strengthening of independent monitoring of rights. In 2014 UNICEF continued its cooperation with the Ombudsman’s Office, the
Commissioner for the Protection of Equality and the Parliamentary Committee on Child Rights, to advance their capacities to actively monitor children’s rights and advocate for the rights of the most vulnerable.

Recent data related to attitudes on social inclusion of children with a disability and public debate related to violence against children and corporal punishment confirmed that much more work is needed to promote positive behaviours among parents, adolescents and children to advance results within the RKLA results areas related to children’s right to a family environment, inclusive quality education, social protection and health.

UNICEF’s efforts to facilitate national dialogue on child-friendly social norms and demand-side bottlenecks were channelled through partnerships with civil society organisations and independent institutions, focused on changing the attitudes of health, education and social sector professionals, as well as the general public, in the areas of equity, the rights of children with a disability, early childhood education, inclusive education and violence against children. Particular focus was on working with the most vulnerable groups of children, particularly Roma, to empower them to recognise and claim their rights. This included face-to-face counselling and skills-building through Roma CSOs working in Roma settlements, and through parenting support centres and community centres supporting the most vulnerable children.

While these initiatives are showing promising results, the key challenge for the future will be to address social norms and influence behaviours that would promote social inclusion.

**OUTPUT 1**

By the end of 2015, civil society organisations, including self-representational groups, effectively mobilise demand for and access to entitlements, influence behavioural change and participate in local decision-making bodies to facilitate social inclusion.

**Analytical Statement of Progress:**

To increase parental skills and awareness of the importance of the early years, particularly among vulnerable groups, UNICEF continued to work with the parents association “Roditelj” in modelling parenting support centres in Belgrade and three other cities. These services have mobilised various partners/sectors and triggered coordination of support to ECD on the local level.

Partnership continued with the Network for Children of Serbia (MODS), resulting in its further strengthening and formal registration of the Network. MODS was effectively advocating for advancement of child rights within selected priority areas, particularly through a public campaign promoting positive parental practices related to child discipline. It received strong support from parents, the Ombudsman, public opinion-leaders and celebrities, including UNICEF’s Ambassador. MODS established a children’s council to create more space for their direct participation. During the flood emergency response, MODS mobilised civil society and advocated for greater attention to child protection. MODS also established good relations with the newly elected Government, the Parliament and independent bodies and continues to be recognised as a representative voice of children’s organisations.

UNICEF continued working with seven community centres located in poor, largely Roma neighbourhoods in South Serbia to develop sustainable programmes for early learning, drop-out prevention and youth empowerment. Programmes are largely supported by local authorities and considered to be very important in preventing drop-out, improving learning outcomes and developing competencies of children and youth.
To increase demand and remove obstacles to the realisation of the rights of the Roma population, UNICEF partnered with the Roma-led CSO Bibija, which brought together and trained 10 Roma CSOs, empowering them to provide support to vulnerable families in attaining their rights by recognising discrimination and rights violations, submitting their complaints to relevant institutions and seeking support from independent bodies.

**OUTPUT 2** By the end of 2015, engagement with media and the private sector result in the application of child-rights oriented standards and an increase in financial and non-financial contributions to social inclusion

**Analytical Statement of Progress:**
UNICEF undertook awareness-raising initiatives on children’s’ rights to reach the wider business community and general public. Child Rights Business Principles (CRBP) and Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) toolkits were disseminated through national CSR events and business associations. MoUs on promotion of CSR focusing on children were signed with Smart Kolektiv and the Business Leaders Forum, and with a leading job-seekers Internet portal “Infostud”. In anticipation of CRC@25, UNICEF, the Business Info Group and the New Economy magazine organised a conference on the “Responsibility of the Business Sector for Present and Future Generations”. The conference gathered leading corporate sector representatives, and highlighted the importance and impact of the business sector on children and their rights.

To strengthen the capacity of the media for child rights programming, UNICEF in four SEE countries organised a sub-regional Conference on Communicating with Children (CwC). The Conference, which gathered over 100 TV producers, media professionals and electronic media regulators, launched local translations of the CwC package, encouraging cross-border exchange of ideas and capacities for inclusive educational TV programmes. Following the Conference, the Serbian Journalists’ Association conducted the analysis of children’s TV programmes in Serbia with UNICEF’s support. Key findings were presented at a roundtable that gathered TV practitioners and regulators from Serbia, Croatia, Bosnia and Herzegovina and the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia. The participants agreed that sub-regional production and exchange of children's programmes was needed, and that the regulators’ supervisory role and the responsibility of TV stations for the content aired needed to be strengthened. The Serbian Ministry of Culture and Information included CwC-based criteria into the grants application for producers and broadcasters seeking to develop children’s programme. Three MoUs signed with local and mainstream media have enhanced child rights public advocacy and strengthened UNICEF’s brand positioning.

UNICEF National Ambassadors were effective advocates for MICS 5, floods emergency, violence prevention and resource mobilisation.

**OUTPUT 3** Private Sector Fundraising (PSFR)

**Analytical Statement of Progress:**
2014 was the last year of sales activity related to UNICEF cards and gifts in Serbia. In close consultation with PFP, UNICEF executed the sales plan that involved a modest order of sales inventory, for which UNICEF ensured pre-payment from all buyers: individual consumers, corporate buyers, retailers. UNICEF’s plan was to ensure sales income of US$153,000 and to secure closure of the sales business, in line with the Country sales closure plan. UNICEF received US$115,000 in gross sales income. The final net income will be known after submitting relevant documentation to PFP in mid-March 2015, and upon final consolidation by the PFP finance section, by the end of second quarter of 2015.
UNICEF Serbia tried to liquidate payments due from 2007 and 2008 from two sales consignees and to close all unliquidated balances. Due payments could not be collected because both companies were financially insolvent. PFP Finance was asked to write off those balances.

UNICEF managed to secure the presence of UNICEF cards and gifts on the market in 2015, through identification of one partner for continuation of sales in Serbia. The partner ordered a limited quantity of UNICEF cards and gifts for 2015 as a transition year. In consultation with PFP, UNICEF will facilitate further negotiation with the partner to secure a licensing deal.

OUTPUT 4 By the end of 2015, independent oversight and monitoring bodies, including CSOs, monitor the impact of relevant education, health and social welfare policies on the most disadvantaged children and use relevant findings to advocate for policy changes.

**Analytical Statement of Progress:**

UNICEF’s cooperation with the Parliamentary Committee on Child Rights was less intensive in 2014, since the new Parliament and its standing committees were only established in May 2014. UNICEF participated in two parliamentary public hearings. One was on perspectives for sustainable financing of social welfare services for children and adults. The Committee marked CRC@25 by reviewing achievements and remaining inequalities and challenges that prevent the full realisation of child rights, particularly of children living and working on the streets.

Partnership with the Commissioner for Protection of Equality continued in 2014, with the signing of a two-year MoU. The Commissioner’s office was supported to communicate recommendations of the first report on discrimination against children and to publish a *Compendium of Cases of Discrimination against Children* in 2014. UNICEF supported further strengthening of the Commissioner’s Youth Panel as a channel for youth participation and promoting non-discrimination among their peers and public. The Youth Panel initiated a review of school textbooks for discriminatory messages.

Partnership with the Deputy Ombudsman for Children was expanded in 2014 to focus on protection of the most vulnerable children, particularly those living and working on the streets, including through the organisation of high-level public debates and support for the Youth Panel. Youth Panel members received training and awareness-raising on the issues and needs of the most vulnerable children; their views and messages will be used for national advocacy and peer awareness raising in their communities. Close cooperation and synergy were developed with the Ombudsman’s office on issues related to child protection during the emergency situation caused by the floods.

The establishment of cooperation between these independent bodies and Roma CSOs was facilitated through the capacity building of Roma CSOs to raise awareness and generate demand for realisation of the rights of the Roma population.

**OUTPUT 5 Private Sector Fundraising**

**Analytical Statement of Progress:**

Total PSFR income generated in 2014 grew for 48 per cent including income raised for emergency in Serbia, B&H and Croatia. The PSFR income for programmes in Serbia grew for 24 per cent in comparison to previous year. Pledge income increased for 64 per cent.

To compensate loss of income due to closure of sales, the office received R&D investment funds in 2013 to conduct fundraising activities that will ensure pledge growth. Even though those activities did not bring planned results related to growth of pledge income, the base of
individual and SMEs donors recruited through those initiative will be further cultivated and the initiative will be rolled out in 2015 to secure regular and flexible income. With introduction of direct debit in the country, the banking infrastructure will be more favourable for further pledge growth. We signed the Agreement with the Komercijalna bank that enables UNICEF to collect donations from the seven banks through direct debit payment method. This initiative is the result of our partnership with the Association of banks of Serbia, and support of 7 leading banks at the market.

UNICEF was engaged in emergency fundraising from the private sector for Serbia’s flood response, raising US$ 249,360. We leveraged our partnership with Novak Djokovic foundation and raised additional US$ 147,371 for UNICEF in Bosnia and Herzegovina and Croatia for the emergency response.

Collaboration with the corporate sector, including corporate foundations focused on higher income, longer term partnerships. During 2014, we secured the expansion of two strategic projects with the Telenor Foundation – Roma health mediators and prevention of digital violence. Both projects were approved by Telenor for continuation until the end of 2016. The partnership with Hemofarm foundation contributed income for the country programme and brand visibility.

National Ambassadors continued with the effective engagement in advocacy and resource mobilisation.

OUTCOME 3 Cross Sectoral

Analytical Statement of Progress:
Correct and timely processing and implementation of activities enabled smooth functioning of UNICEF in Serbia.

OUTPUT 1 Effective and Efficient Support to Programme Implementation

Analytical Statement of Progress: With the funds utilised for this component, UNICEF provided human resource, administrative, and travel support towards the achievement of outputs across the Country Programme of Cooperation. These costs included the maintenance of office space and vehicles, IT equipment, office supplies and other administrative costs. In response to the May 2014 flood emergency, UNICEF rapidly procured hygiene packages, blankets and water pumps which were distributed to affected communities in partnership with the Serbian Red Cross, and secured logistics and coordination support for its emergency response. Support was also provided during the recovery phase for the procurement of school equipment and furniture, school textbooks and notebooks for flood-affected primary school pupils.

OUTPUT 2 Governance and Systems

Analytical Statement of Progress:
The Annual Management Plan was completed in a timely manner, and followed up at all CMT meetings, as well as at mid-year and end-year reviews.

Management indicators were tracked regularly through monthly management, grants utilisation and outstanding DCT reports. Progress was reviewed at CMT and programme meetings, and
corrective actions were taken in a timely manner.

UNICEF Serbia’s Risk and Control Library was reviewed in March 2014. The CMT concluded that all risks identified in 2013 were still valid. Of the six key risks identified, three were assessed as low, two as medium, and one risk, related to potential shortfalls of funds, was assessed as high. The action plan for this risk, and mitigation measures put in place, were successful. UNICEF secured IPA funds; pledge income in 2014 was increased through an additional investment programme; and additional allocation to compensate for the originally reduced RR was secured.

The Emergency Risk Assessment component of the Early Warning/Early Action web site was updated in July. The UNICEF Serbia risk profile and preparedness pages of the EWEA, including key actions, were updated and uploaded into the system.

The Business Continuity Plan was updated in October, taking into consideration the experience gained during the response to the flood emergency in May/June. The CMT met regularly during 2014 and reviewed programme and operational targets and priorities, office performance indicators and management of resources, the staff learning and development plan, staff welfare, safety and security matters and other programmatic and operational issues.

OUTPUT 3 Effective and Efficient Management and Stewardship of Financial Resources

Analytical Statement of Progress:
All operational targets and indicators defined in the AMP for 2014 were on track at the end-year review. The CMT monitored programme implementation and DCT management through a set of regular management reports. As of mid-year, the utilisation rate was 100 per cent for RR, 100 per cent for SB, 96 per cent for OR, 89 per cent for ORE, and 100 per cent for thematic grants. At the end of 2014, UNICEF Serbia had no outstanding DCTs; it kept outstanding DCT rates for both over six and nine months below the targets of 2 per cent and 0 per cent, respectively. During the year only one DCT was outstanding for more than six months (0.9 per cent of total DCTs at that time), and only for a short period of time. Moreover, there were no outstanding DCTs for more than nine months throughout the year.

Bank optimisation and cash forecasting tools were used for efficient utilisation and planning of financial resources. Deadlines for bank reconciliations and reporting were met, as well as the deadlines for mid-year-end and end-year closure reporting.

Fundraising gathered momentum, with a major new grant secured from the European Union (2.5 million Euros) and additional funds were received from the Swiss Development Cooperation (1 million CHF), in addition to the private sector and National Committee funds raised in response to the flood emergency.

HACT assurance activities were closely monitored throughout the year, and special attention was paid to the level of effort, which was aligned with partners’ risk ratings. Following the latest HACT guidance, UNICEF Serbia contracted a third-party service provider for micro-assessments, special audits and spot-checks. One scheduled audit, six micro-assessments and two spot-checks were undertaken by the third-party service provider, while four simplified financial checklists and 50 spot-checks were performed by qualified UNICEF staff. Two HACT training sessions for partners were conducted during the year.
OUTPUT 4 Sales

Analytical Statement of Progress:

2014 was the last year for the sales activities related to UNICEF cards and gifts in Serbia. In close consultation with PFP, UNICEF executed the sales plan that involved a modest order of sales inventory, for which we ensured pre-payment from all buyers: individual consumers, corporate buyers, retailers. UNICEF’s plan was to ensure sales income of US$153,000 and to secure closure of the sales business, in line with the Country sales closure plan. We managed to obtain US$115,000 in gross sales income. The final net income will be known after submitting relevant documentation to PFP in mid-March 2015, and upon final consolidation by the PFP finance section, by the end of second quarter of 2015.

UNICEF Serbia tried to liquidate payments due from 2007 and 2008 from the two sales consignees and to close all unliquidated balances. Due payments could not be collected because both companies were financially insolvent. PFP Finance was asked to write off those balances.

UNICEF managed to secure the presence of UNICEF cards and gifts on the market in 2015, through identification of one partner for continuation of sales in Serbia. The partner ordered a limited quantity of UNICEF cards and gifts for 2015 as a transition year. In consultation with PFP, UNICEF will facilitate further negotiation with the partner to secure a licensing deal.

OUTPUT 6 Sales

Analytical Statement of Progress:

Total PSFR income generated in 2014 grew by 48 per cent, including income raised for flood emergencies in Serbia, Bosnia and Herzegovina and Croatia. PSFR income for programmes in Serbia grew by 24 per cent compared to 2013. Pledge income increased by 64 per cent. To compensate the loss of income due to the closure of sales, the Office received R&D investment funds in 2013 to conduct fundraising activities that would ensure pledge growth. Even though those activities did not produce the planned results related to growth of pledge income, the database of individual and SME donors recruited through this initiative will be further cultivated and the initiative will be rolled out in 2015 to secure regular and flexible income.

With the introduction of direct debit services in the country, the banking infrastructure will be more favourable for further pledge growth. UNICEF signed an agreement with the Komercijalna Bank that enables UNICEF to collect donations from seven banks through the direct debit payment method. This initiative is the result of our partnership with the Association of Banks of Serbia, and the support of seven leading banks in the market.

UNICEF was engaged in emergency fundraising from the private sector for Serbia's flood response, raising US$249,360. UNICEF leveraged our partnership with the Novak Djokovic Foundation, raising an additional US$147,371 for UNICEF Offices in Bosnia and Herzegovina and Croatia for the emergency response.

Collaboration with the corporate sector, including corporate foundations, focused on higher income and longer-term partnerships. During 2014 UNICEF secured the expansion of two strategic projects with the Telenor Foundation – on Roma health mediators and on the prevention of digital violence. Both projects were approved by Telenor for continuation through
the end of 2016. Partnership with the Hemofarm Foundation contributed income for the Country Programme as well as brand visibility.

National Ambassadors continued to undertake effective engagement in advocacy and resource mobilisation.

**Document Center**

**Evaluation**

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**CPMP Reference Documents:**

- CEECIS_Serbia_CPMP_2011_2015
- UNDAF 2011-2015, Serbia, CEECIS

**Reference Documents:**

- CEECIS_Serbia_CPAP Results and Resources Framework 2011-2015
- CPAP_Narrative.pdf

- UNDAF 2011 2015_Serbia.pdf
- CPAP_Annex 1_RM.pdf